

# SPEECH

OF THE

HON. DANIEL SHEFFEY,

ON

## A BILL

*Authorising a Loan of 25,000,000 Dollars,*

VERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRU-  
ARY 11TH, 1814.

---

ALEXANDRIA:

PRINTED BY SNOWDEN AND SIMMS.

.....  
1814.

177



# SPEECH.

MR. SHEFFEY, said that on this occasion, it became the duty of the committee to look beyond the present moment. The resolution submitted by the honorable chairman of the committee of means and means required them to consider not only whether there was in the country, a capacity and disposition to furnish the money now wanted, but whether this system of loans and expenditure of which the present measure constituted a part, could continue until the professed objects of the war were accomplished. There is certainly (said Mr. Sheffey,) no honorable member on the floor, who entertains serious doubts on this subject, who will not feel disposed at least to pause. There is none who shall be so convinced that this system has its limits, and that those limits are not of your object, who will not think the *present*, the *best* moment to arrest your progress. To continue the effusion of blood and the waste of money *without hope* would be wanton and cruel. The sum proposed to be raised by loans (including the Treasury notes) as a portion of the means necessary to defray the expences of the present year is Thirty millions of dollars. Though exceeding in amount any loan ever attempted in this country (as is admitted) and exceeding any loan ever obtained in any other country means and circumstances considered) as I shall have occasion hereafter to notice, yet it will be far short of our necessities should our army equal the number estimated. The Secretary at present estimates the military expenditures at twenty four and one millions of dollars and our military force for the year at thirty three thousand men, thus making the average cost per man more than four hundred dollars. If we judge from past experience we are inclined to believe the average cost will fall little short of five hundred dollars per man and therefore if the Secretary's preparations are to be regarded, our military expenditures will this year amount to fifty million of dollars.

During the fiscal year which commenced on the first day of October 1812, and ended on the 30th September 1813, the vast sums paid on account of the military service amounted to more than eighteen millions of dollars and about six thousand dollars less than the sum appropriated. The paper laid on our table shewing the near approach of the amount actually paid to the sum appropriated may have been considered by some as high evidence of the wisdom and sagacity of those who manage our affairs: let them not be deceived. Nothing is more fallacious than the idea that the *expenditure* is limited by the appropriation. *Actual payments* only are so limited. If there is an excess of expenditure, it constitutes a debt which is paid out of the next appropriation. To prevent the whole sum appropriated for the



military service from being paid as demands may require, and thereby prematurely exhaust the means of payment, the Treasury Department has interposed a restriction by which but one twelfth part of the amount appropriated can be drawn monthly. Thus the appropriation for the last year being about eighteen millions, the Treasurer as agent for the War Department receives a monthly credit of one million and a half: beyond this sum no payment could be made whatever the demand might be. Should there have been any application within the month after the sum set apart was exhausted the claimant would be postponed, would have to wait until the waters were again moved, and if not preceded by others, or thrown back in the scramble might be satisfied.

Sir, we have no means by which the actual military expenditures can be ascertained. Such is the manner of disbursement and the state of the various branches of the War Department that no person knows, or can know how much of the immense sums drawn from the Treasury is actually paid to those entitled thereto; or how much remains due. Many millions are received by officers and contractors in the way of advances, who instead of being called upon at short stated periods to account, retain large sums for months, often for years and sometimes forever. There is in fact no system; no accountability. The people's money is squandered to enrich those who riot on the public spoils, and is fattened by their calamities. Little as I know I have heard and seen enough to convince me of the profligacy, profusion and corruption which attends the expenditure of your public money. No person can form an adequate idea of the amount; nor will it be known until long after the war shall be closed. You are in the habit of passing laws to provide for the payment of claims not before contemplated, the extent of which you do not anticipate. It is moreover evident that many claims that accrued before the close of the last fiscal year, were either not presented or not paid: I know of many large ones in that situation. Though I have certain data I have no hesitation in believing that the actual expenditure exceeded the appropriation ten million of dollars.

Mr. Eppes interrupted Mr. Sheffey and said that if the gentleman had any evidence of the fact he stated he requested him to produce it.

Mr. Sheffey resumed. The gentleman calls upon me for evidence. If he means positive evidence; I have already stated there is none. No mortal being knows the actual amount of expenditure. It is a matter of reasoning and deduction merely. The only thing is certain that the eighteen millions appropriated last year for the military service are insufficient to pay the demands that ought and must be paid. The gentleman himself has presented the claim of Virginia amounting to nearly \$400,000 which is not satisfied. The claims of other States and of individuals are in



same situation—admitting however (and it is yielding much) that the excess of expenditure is but five millions. The expence of our military operations during the year which ended on the 30th September last, amounts to more than twenty three millions of dollars.

Let us examine what was the state of our military force during the same period. On this subject it will not be expected that I should exhibit evidence in its character, either positive or conclusive ; none such I believe exists. And that which the records of the War Department might furnish interclusive as it must be, is not confided to us. We the representatives of the people are not permitted to know the real state of the peoples concerns, lest the information should be improvidently used. It is withheld from us, as edge tools are withheld from children. In the absence therefore of every thing like official information, I must be permitted to resort to such facts and estimates as are within my reach ; the result though it may not be minutely accurate, will be sufficiently so to serve every purpose connected with the present discussion.

If the estimate of the Secretary at War as to the expence per man is to be relied on, it follows that the military force of the United States, between the 30th September 1812, and 1st October 1813, on an average must have exceeded fifty six thousand men. Indeed the appropriations made, contemplated effectual provision for that number. Is there any person who does believe such to have been the fact ? Where were they employed ? What positions did they occupy ? During the first quarter of the year, at the moment most favorable, when every effort had been made to collect the greatest force on the Niagara frontier, to penetrate into Canada, the commanding officer states the number at less than 2000 men—it unquestionably was much less a great portion of the time. Very few of the Pennsylvania brigade of militia was in service the whole period. The army under Gen. Harrison, including the posts on, and in the vicinity of Lake Erie, did not much exceed 3000 men. On Lake Champlain, and the frontier in that quarter about 2000 men were stationed. The forces in Louisiana and West Florida, amounted to about the same number. And in Georgia and the Carolinas, there were not more. Allowing 4000 men for every other place, the average number would be about 15000 men.

During the second quarter of the year, there was no considerable addition made to the number of our military force, except so far as respects the militia, called out for the defence of Norfolk and the coasts on the Chesapeake. The recruiting service progressed but slowly : many of the militia and volunteers were discharged, and great mortality prevailed in the regular army. Indeed not until towards the close of the last quarter, was there any considerable augmentation ; about that time, our force might be estimated thus—



Under Wilkinson,	7500
Hampton,	4000
Harrison,	3000
Militia and Volunteers on the Northern frontier,	5000
Norfolk and the Chesapeake,	5000
Louisiana, Georgia and the Carolinas,	4000
All other places,	6500
	<hr/>
Making the average for the last quarter,	35,000
	<hr/>

And for the year ending on the 30th September 1813, about 25000 men.

In the estimate which I have submitted, I am certain that I have rather gone beyond, than fallen short of the true average number. Generals Wilkinson and Hampton at no period during the campaign, had a greater force than that estimated. And Gen. Harrison's was much below 3000, independent of the Kentucky and Ohio militia, who did not commence their march until about the beginning of September.

The result which follows makes the average expence per man, little less than one thousand dollars for the last year. Evidence drawn from recent experience tends strongly to support this conclusion. The expence during the first four months of the war, according to the best estimate I could make, was at the rate of nine hundred dollars per man, per annum: for 1809, our army cost us four hundred and ninety dollars per man, including all military expences, as appeared by the documents laid before us: and we were then in a state of profound peace. The increase bounty we pay which has since been granted; the host of officers which are supported—the expence of transportation; the enhanced price of munitions; the arms and ordinance required; the losses and waste attending a state of war: leave little doubt of the general correctness of the opinion expressed. It follows that the estimate of twenty-four & a half millions for sixty-three thousand men is totally incorrect: we shall expend *more than double the sum*, or shall have *less than one half the army* estimated. The latter will most probably be the case. The money will be expended, and when we shall hereafter enquire into the strength of our military force, we shall be (as we have been) told that the information is not proper to be communicated, lest the enemy should obtain knowledge of our weakness. Thus the delusion is kept up. The peoples money is squandered while the most important facts connected with their best interests are veiled from their eyes.

The honorable chairman of the committee of ways and means when he submitted the motion now before you, attempted to prove that this country had the means to furnish the loan proposed; and that it was the interest of capitalists, and of course their disposition, to accommodate the government. This was perfectly states-



man like. He gave us a detailed statement, the correctness of which I am not disposed to question, tending to shew the wealth of this country. But he failed entirely, in my humble opinion in the inferences he was disposed to draw, and which were essential to his object. The wealth of a community does not furnish any *certain* data, from which to infer the existence of any disposable means, much less such means as *naturally* take such a direction. The wealth of a nation may be respectable in amount, yet there may be no surplus beyond the wants of its people; its industry may produce periodical surplusses, but if let alone will be otherwise and perhaps, better employed than in loans to the government.

The honorable gentleman's first item in the account of our national wealth, is the improved lands, the value of which he estimates at nine hundred and eighty-two millions of dollars. *Land is truly, the great source of all wealth*, but it does not follow, that those who possess it have the means, alone suited to the object of the present bill. If the value of landed property in Sweden and Norway, was estimated by the standard of public opinion there, it would probably exceed the sum at which the gentleman estimates ours. Yet they have very little money capital. Holland in her better days was poor in land, while her money wealth exceeded all example. Our own country furnishes sufficient evidence that land and other property constituting agricultural stock, is not (and does not necessarily produce) in the hands of the proprietors extensive monied means. The planters of the south possess their thousands of acres and their hundreds, and even their thousands of slaves. The inhabitants of the west own immense quantities of the most fertile lands, estimated among themselves at a high value. Yet they have very little money capital. How much have *individuals*, from those sections of the union (I speak not here of banks) contributed to your former loans? Comparatively nothing. This is not owing to their opposition to the war; for it not only has their undivided support, but their enthusiastic affection. Some of them, particularly the citizens of Kentucky have manifested their sincerity in the cause, by bestowing upon it their hearts blood. If the honorable gentleman will look to his own district he will see a considerable portion of wealth in lands and personal property; yet I presume his constituents have not contributed much to the loans—so it is in mine. Though there are several individuals who are really wealthy, I know of one only who has subscribed any thing. The reason is that many have no surplus means, and those who have, think it more prudent and more productive to vest them in something else.

What I have said on the subject of land is applicable to every other species of visible property, and particularly personal property. *Its* value constitutes no evidence of the disposable monied means of a community. It is either a subject of *expense* to the



proprietor, or it constitutes a part of his *capital* in some branch of industry. In our country, a very great portion is really agricultural stock which I before noticed, or commercial capital; in the latter case it is clearly comprehended in another item of the gentleman's statement.

The honorable gentleman has included in his account of our national wealth, the *value* of the public lands which he estimates at eight hundred millions of dollars. This is not the first time that we have been presented with this object, as constituting in itself the most unbounded resources. I recollect several years ago, when the war in which we are now engaged was in prospect, the honorable gentleman in his place as chairman of the committee of ways and means, with a view as I understood, to justify such an ulterior resort; and the profuse expenditure it would necessarily occasion, stated that our resources were far beyond those of any nation of modern times. I listened with the utmost attention in the expectation of some new developement, some new principle in finance to which I had been an utter stranger. But I confess I was sadly disappointed, when I heard that the public lands constituted this boundless, this inexhaustible treasure. Sir, when we are called on to provide for *present* expenditures, and *present* demands, it surely becomes us not to refer to *future* means which it requires ages to accumulate, which can be brought to your aid in small periodical contributions only. Your public lands constitute a capital from which you draw a variable annuity equal to the nett annual amount of sales. That amount has seldom exceeded five hundred thousand dollars per annum, and very often been much below it. Admit, however, the average amount to be expected into the treasury, equal to six hundred thousand dollars per annum, the *present* cash value of all the public land, does not exceed ten millions of dollars. Because a cash capital to that amount would produce a perpetual annuity of six hundred thousand dollars at six per cent. It may be said, however, that the sales of our lands will progress with the increase of population. This in some degree may be true. But the increase of population will extend and multiply the sedentary arts. The improvements in agriculture and the clearing of lands already private property, will provide the means of subsistence for a greater number. Besides the vast quantities of lands owned by states and individuals, will come into competition with you after your most favored spots are sold; so that with the daily diminution in point of *real* value of the remnant in the market, no considerable increase in the amount of sales can be expected.

The Honorable Gentleman, also presented to our view, the amount of our Bank capital, which he estimates at seventy five million of dollars. He supposes the average amount of Bank paper issued and outstanding, with the specie not in the vaults of



the Banks, to amount to one hundred millions, and therefore that the circulating medium of the country is equal to that sum. On these topics, the appearance is too often taken for the reality : and on no subject, are appearances more delusive than on these. So long as Bank payments can be demanded in specie ; so long as specie constitutes the basis of all money transactions, so long the real bank capital in a community, cannot exceed the actual amount of specie. The excess is a nominal or credit capital, which it is the object of banks to organize and modify, to supply the deficiency of a real or specie capital.

To illustrate this idea, let me suppose a community without Banks, whose whole circulating medium consisted of specie. That in this situation a Bank should be created of a capital, exceeding the amount of all the specie, and the whole stock to be paid in that medium on a certain day. It would most unquestionably follow, that the stock subscribed, could not exceed the amount of specie, or in other words, the banking could not exceed the specie capital. As things are, however the paper or credit of existing banks, constitutes a great portion of the capital of every new bank ; and thus bank capital is multiplied, without any addition either of specie or *real* wealth.

To Simplify the subject, and to shew the manner in which bank capital is multiplied, let me suppose that in a small community, the whole circulating medium amounted to three thousand dollars specie, owned by three individuals A. B. and C. in equal proportions ; that they should establish a bank called A's Bank, comprising the whole of the money in which they were interested alike, and which was restricted not to issue paper to a greater amount than its capital :—Afterwards, they should determine to establish another called B's Bank. But having no further real means, they should obtain accommodation at A's Bank, each to the amount of his stock—paid in notes. They would be then enabled to pay the capital of B's Bank. If they should be disposed to erect a third Bank—they might do it in the same manner, by obtaining discounts at B's Bank, each to the amount of his stock. Here there would be a *nominal* banking capital of nine thousand dollars, when a *real* capital of three thousand dollars only existed—each of the Banks would not exceed in issues the amount of its capital, and each might be justly considered as perfectly solvent, its capital being immediately or immediately represented by the amount in specie.

Let me suppose another case, A. B. and C. each, possess \$ 500 in specie ; They agree to establish a Bank of three thousand dollars capital, in which they are to be the sole stockholders, and equally interested, and which is to commence its operations when *one half* the capital is paid in. Each pays the money he has, upon which the Bank is organized. To enable them to pay the balance of their stock, each obtains a discount to the amount due :



Here is a capital *nominally* of three thousand dollars, but *really* of fifteen hundred only. These cases though hypothetical, shew the principles of paper credit, which exist more or less in every banking institution; and constitute the basis on which the extension of bank capital rests.

As it respects the amount of bank paper issued, I think with the honorable member from Connecticut, [Mr. Pitkin] that the opinions generally entertained, are very incorrect. It is believed that the issues far exceed the capital, because there is a *legal power* to do so. But there is a discretion, which prudence dictates in the management of such affairs, more restrictive than the legal discretion. The question is not what amount can be issued? But what amount *can be kept* in circulation. The consequences of an excessive emission is, that the paper will return in rapid succession and increased quantities, and for the want of real means in hand, the credit of the institution is hazarded. Equally fallacious is the idea, that the aggregate amount of paper issued by the various banks is evidence of the amount of paper *in circulation*. Extended as the banking capital is beyond the amount of specie in the country, Bank notes constitute a portion of the stock of every bank; every one of them has, and is compelled to have, the paper of other institutions, as a portion of its means to support its credit, and to meet the payment of its own notes. The operation in a more simple form is this—every bank takes *out of circulation*, a portion of the paper of other banks to enable it, to supply it with its own.

The honorable gentleman has supposed that the ability of Banks to make loans to the government is increased by the destruction of foreign commerce. There is a view in which this idea seems plausible, and it may even in some degree be correct. But such a state of things produces difficulties, which I fear have either been overlooked or not duly estimated. In times of active commerce, a considerable portion of bank paper is drawn to the interior of the country from the commercial towns by the farmers and planters, as the price of their produce, which returns *gradually*, and is again supplied by the same cause. But in our present situation, little paper can be kept in many parts of the interior, because the products of the country will not sell, or sell at diminished prices. Bank paper now gravitates to the seats of great *public* expenditure and to those places where the balance of our internal trade centres, from whence it returns not in drops, but in torrents calculated to overwhelm some banks, who in a different state of the country, would have maintained their credit with a greater amount of paper outstanding. I have understood that serious difficulties have already been experienced. One bank (I am credibly informed) of great credit and capital in New-York, who loaned to the government one million of dollars, has lately been drawn upon for a large sum which it could not immediately pay. These



things will beget suspicion : and suspicion once generally current, the credit of the banks, the vital principle of their existence, must be greatly impaired, if not entirely destroyed. The large sums contributed by the banks to the former loans, connected with these circumstances, induce me to believe, that in the present state of the country, they will not deem it prudent to go much further, unless they dispose of their present stock ; an operation which in the aggregate furnishes no *new* means. Indeed so far as respects the banks of the state, which the gentleman and myself in part represent, there is no doubt of the fact. During the late session of the legislature, the president of the bank of Virginia, informed a committee of the house of delegates, that the loans made to the general government, and its ordinary demands require the reimbursement at the stipulated time, of 350,000 dollars, which that bank had loaned to the state for one year. It is true, that it has since re-loaned the same sum at seven per cent interest, on condition of having its capital increased. The other bank also has loaned to the state a further sum of 400,000 dollars at the same interest. But I hesitate not to assert that they have gone to the utmost limits permitted by prudence.

The honorable gentleman in the course of his remarks, assumed a position in my opinion, not only new, but extraordinary. He attempted to establish (by referring to authority) that forty-seven millions, was the greatest amount of circulating medium requisite for the purposes of any community not exceeding ours in population. He estimated the circulation of this country at one hundred millions, and thence inferred that there is a surplus of fifty-three millions, which could be loaned to the government.

I have attempted to shew that the gentleman is much mistaken in the amount of the circulation ; but if that was even correct, his conclusion is totally irreconcilable with any idea I have on the subject. That the *utmost wants* of the country cannot require more than a given sum, and yet that more than double that sum be *actually employed* is beyond my comprehension. The circulating medium of a country, is the representative of property, and can represent but such portion as periodically becomes the subject of exchange ; and though it may fall short of that, it cannot go beyond it. It does not much affect the stock or capital of the community. Even large additions of the precious metals, do not increase the wealth of a nation ; because something equivalent in value must be given for it. A person who sells a horse for 100 dollars in specie, is not made the richer by the sale ; he has got something in exchange, which may enable him to divide the value of his property, so as more conveniently to suit his purposes. An excess of circulating medium can not long continue. (if it ever can exist.) If it consists in specie, it will find its way to a place of greater scarcity ; If of paper, it will return to the place of its emission or depreciate. A full circulation gives activity and



promptitude to the intercourse of society. And a scarcity tends to embarrass it by making credit necessary, so as to enable a given sum, to take a larger circuit passing from the hands of debtor to creditor, so that in its progress it may *gradually* effect what is *promptly* effected in the other case. These are the chief effects accruing from a profuse or scarce circulation.

The honorable gentleman, also brought into view the amount of the annual profit, as well on the real and personal property, as on the money capital vested in Commerce, Bank stock, Turnpikes, Canals, Insurances, &c. He too added, the gross product of the labor of the community in all other branches of productive industry. His estimate in the aggregate amounting to about two hundred and thirty-five millions of dollars, I am not disposed to question, I believe it rather below than above the true amount. But I cannot see how any result connected with the present question can follow. If we were deliberating on the propriety of imposing a *tax* or income, it would be very proper to enquire into the *resources* of individuals, without reference to any surplus, because *it* would constitute the basis of the tax, and regulate its product. But the present question can be influenced only, not by the amount of means created by the capital and labour of the community, but by the surplus, which it can dispose of after providing for all its wants. An individual may possess considerable revenue, but he may have no annual surplus, beyond his own wants fancied or real. Appearances in relation to communities are still more delusive; because the product of capital and industry is taken in the aggregate, which constitutes a very imposing amount, when in reality there is not a particle of surplus.

In the course of the remarks which I have submitted, I have attempted to establish, that the ability of this country to support the system of Loans, of which that now required constitutes a part, is not inferable from any of the facts presented to us by the honorable chairman of the committee of ways and means. I shall now attempt to show that no such ability does exist. That there is not among us a capital of any considerable amount that *naturally* belongs to such an object.

Capital as it is generated by the productive occupations of a community, the principal branches of which are agriculture, commerce and manufactures, so every addition to it, will generally seek employment in the particular branch from whence it sprung until by progressive accumulation it shall have risen to an amount sufficiently extensive for all the purposes of the society, or until in that particular department, an increase of capital shall not yield any (or very little) increase of profit. The periodical profits then will seek another direction. If there is any other *productive* occupation which wants capital, and promises advantage it will most naturally draw to it; and this process will continue until each branch of industry, has a capital sufficient for every purpose. When the annual profit shall exceed the increase of capital neces



sary, and which can be employed profitably, then only can any considerable means arise, which without artificial impulses will be vested in government securities. Then Loans will (as they ought) consist of the *profits* of the industrious occupations, and not as with us, of their *capital*.

In Great Britain where the system of Loans has been carried to a greater extent, than in any other country of ancient or modern date, the capacity to borrow, is only limited by the capacity to pay the interest. The reason is, that the profits of her commercial and manufacturing capital are greater, than the natural means to extend their employment. All the commerce which her relations with the rest of the world permits, can be carried on, and all the fabrics that can be vended, can be manufactured and a surplus of annual profit remains for the use of the government.

The existence of large surplus monied means, is attended by circumstances which cannot be mistaken, and which are of themselves conclusive. The industrious occupations which constitute particularly the sources of the wealth of the community will be extended, flourishing, and in a state of the utmost improvement. The competition of capitalists in the market will reduce the interest of money very low. Internal improvements, such as turnpike roads, canals, aqueducts and rail ways, will cover the face of the country; and you will see a tendency to expend money on objects which yield no immediate return, but serve as provisions for posterity. Compare these natural evidences with the real state of things among us. Our agriculture though constituting the chief branch of domestic industry, and a great source of national wealth, in many parts of the union is yet in a rude state. The *legal* interest of money is not only high, but three and four times the rate was not unusual in some of our commercial towns, when we had an active commerce. To the south of the Potowmack, there are but one or two turnpike roads, that can be called such, and as to canals all in the country, are not worthy of notice. Even the Chesapeake and Delaware canal so important, cannot be opened without public aid. Had the money capital of the country been as redundant, as gentlemen suppose that would not only have been long since effected, but the water communication between Lake Erie and the Hudson river, would not at this day be a subject of speculation only. Of aqueducts and rail ways, we know nothing but the names.

The commercial capital of this country has (I admit) accumulated beyond example, and has become very considerable. But I believe not much greater than our wants require. If it is sufficient for all our purposes in times of active foreign commerce, it is as much as I believe the fact will warrant. Though our prosperity between 1793, and 1807, was uncommonly great, yet it ought to be recollected, that at the close of the revolutionary war we had no commercial means. A great portion of our commerce was carried on by British capitalists, either through the agency of their fac-



tors our own merchants. Supposing the capital requisite for our commerce then to amount to twenty millions, I think it may be safely said, that not more than one fourth was really American. Admitting for a portion of the time the profits to have been thirty-three and a third per cent. instead of ten and fifteen the usual mercantile profit, it could not have accumulated at this day to a sum much greater than is wanted.

Nothing marks more strongly the progressive increase of our commercial capital, and at the same time shews, that it is not yet redundant than the progress of the East India trade. For some years after the peace of 1783, the India goods consumed in this country, came through the English market, because our merchants could not engage in a commerce, which though profitable beyond that in which they were concerned, required a capital which they did not possess. Besides a small capital requires promptitude in the returns of its profits, a tendency manifested in this country in almost every thing, in which money is employed, and which a voyage to India does not permit. You accordingly see the first adventures in the direct trade to India, from the Eastern and Northern States, where capital first accumulated. It is but a few years since the first ship sailed from Baltimore, directly to the East Indies, and I believe none belongs to any port South of that place, engaged in that trade.

I have attempted to shew that in ordinary times, when the enterprise and industry of our people, are permitted to take their natural direction, there are very little disposable monied means in this country. I do not contend that there is not a *money capital* equal to your *present* wants—which may be withdrawn from its accustomed employment. That in fact is your only reliance; you must direct the commercial capital from its accustomed channel into your treasury. And this is the tendency of your policy, whatever be its object. You destroy commerce to fill your loans. The honorable gentleman, himself seems to be of that opinion. He has told us that it is the interest of the merchant to loan his money to the government, because when peace and commerce are restored, he will not only receive an enhanced price for his stock, but will be able to convert it again into commercial capital with the utmost facility; whereas should we vest it in manufacturing employments he would at the end of the war, be subject to losses in the sale of his houses and machinery. Sir, gentlemen seem to be prepared at all points. When they want votes they address themselves to the manufacturer and tell him and the nation, that one of the most valuable effects of this war, will be that it will make us independent of foreign manufactures—not independent during the war; but *for all future times*. When they want money they address themselves to the merchant, and to allure him he is informed, when peace returns commerce shall resume its former activity and former extent. I should like to be able to



reconcile these contradictions. If we are to become independent of foreign manufactures ; I wish to know, what our foreign commerce will consist in. Are we to have what every rational man knows cannot exist for any time—an export, but no import trade ? If foreign commerce is to resume its former extent, what becomes of your boasted independence and the manufacturer ? The gentleman has told us. He will have to sell his buildings and machinery at a sacrifice.

When the honorable gentleman told us, that the merchant could, at the end of the war, sell with facility and profit, the stock he had acquired by contributing to your loans, he ought to have informed us, where the purchasers will come from. He has shewn us that it will be the merchants interest to sell, but he has failed to shew whose interest it will be to purchase, or who will have the means to do so. Sir one of these consequences will most unquestionably follow—The competition of stock in the market, will very much depress it below its nominal value ; or the merchant will be compelled to retain it ; or it must be purchased with a foreign capital. The depression of the price of stock in the event of peace, if probable, will be anticipated, and those who have the means will either withhold them, or make their terms with an eye to that event. If the merchant shall be compelled instead of employing the means (his industry acquired) in the useful and productive pursuits to which he has been accustomed, to remain an inactive drone drawing his revenue from the treasury, so much the worse for him and the community. Should he resume his commercial enterprise, without disposing of his stock, he must do it with a capital belonging to foreigners. He must commence his business anew, and all the inconveniences attending such an individual, and the community of which he is a member, necessarily follow. Should the stock at the end of the war fall into the hands of foreign capitalists, which is most probable, you become tributary to a foreign nation. The industry of this community will have to provide the revenue of persons not members of it, and which will be spent in another country. So long as it is inconsiderable it will not be materially felt. But should your course continue until the amount shall greatly increase, it will become a serious evil. The annuities will constitute a balance of trade against you equal to their amount which must be provided for by an excess of exports, beyond the imports, or by a correspondent diminution in the imports ; besides the exchange always regulated by the amount of funds to be drawn away, will become unfavorable, by which an actual loss will be sustained.

To those who are not content to look to the present moment only, but who deem it their duty to cast their eyes over the whole extent, embraced by your financial or rather borrowing system, it will be an object of some importance, to know how long it can



continue, admitting it practicable for the moment. It is a matter beyond all doubt that every loan subtracts from the money capital of the country employed in the industrious occupations, and is not supplied by the *profit arising from its use*. Indeed it would be preposterous to talk of the profit of such capital when the greater portion of it is thrown out of employment. Admitting the gentlemen's own positions the whole disposable means will be exhausted in a very short period. Supposing even the whole commercial capital to be convertible to such purposes, a few more loans will bring gentlemen to the end of their means; what will be done then? They will themselves, predict the consequences. They will tell you, that ruin to the public credit, and every possible calamity to the country, awaits the refusal to provide the means now asked. And surely those evils will not be mitigated when a heavy accumulation of the public debt has been effected.

The principle which has been adopted to defray the war expenditures by Loans entirely, with our deficiency of the means necessary for such purposes, must accelerate the destruction of public credit, and bring you to the end of your resources in a little time. In no country that I know of, has the experiment ever been made to the same extent. In Great Britain, where a war of twenty years with the most colossal power of modern days, has compelled the government to go greater lengths than ever was attempted in any other nation we do not find any example to justify the proposition now before you. I believe no loan in that country for the service of any one year, has extended beyond twenty-seven millions sterling. Her means to support such a system, are beyond all comparison, when put in the scale against ours. Every thing there manifests an abundant capital. Her commerce, her manufactures, her agriculture, exhibit appearances calculated to convince every one, that there are no means wanting to cherish them. Her internal improvements of every kind, shew that these means *have overflowed their natural channel*, and the vast sums which have been loaned to the government without diminishing in any degree the natural growth of these objects, shew that the annual profits of capital there are sufficient to continue the ability to support the system to any extent. If the value of the property of the country is any criterion of the ability to provide these means, the comparison is equally unfavorable. I have lately seen the estimate of an author of some celebrity, who has written on the commerce of Europe, who estimates the whole property in Great Britain, at about four thousand millions sterling, which is ten times greater in amount than the estimate of all the property in this country.

Hitherto sir, I have restricted myself to the mere question of finance. But the subject embraces considerations of much greater importance. We are required to provide large pecuniary



means calculated to entail on the country heavy and lasting burthens. It is our right therefore, and much more our solemn duty, to enquire what valuable, or practicable object is to be attained by it. We are told it is the successful prosecution of the war, in which this country is now engaged.

I was originally opposed to the declaration of war, as a measure of extreme imprudence, calculated to add to the evils we complained of, without the hope of removing any. I did believe that we had sufficient cause of war, against both the great Belligerents. I mean such cause as States have generally regarded as sufficient; such as great Britain herself, has often considered as ample provocation to justify hostilities. But I did not deem it either wise, or just to ourselves, to imitate her example. Her history shews that she engaged in the war of the Spanish succession—that she deemed the disturbance of her subjects, on the inhospitable Falkland Islands—their interruption in the fur trade at Nootka sound, as sufficient cause of war. But it also shews the consequences to which her policy led. In the midst of the most abundant wealth, millions of her population are supported by public charity; many thousands rise in the morning without, knowing *where or how* to obtain subsistence for the day, and many more are obliged to go supperless to bed. I conceived this government was constituted to promote the happiness of our people, which ought to be its primary object. And I felt persuaded, that if we commenced the career which England had run, we should show the same consequences. The profligacy and corruption, the legitimate offspring of war and its invariable attendants, are calculated to destroy that equality the soul of public happiness. The products of industry instead of giving to labour its means of comfort and subsistence, is bestowed on the most worthless who have art enough to take advantage of the public misfortunes.

The period selected by the majority for this new experiment, seemed to me most unfortunate. On the other side of the Atlantic, the most tremendous revolution, that the world ever witnessed had prostrated the independence and liberties of nations, and with them their commerce. From the head of the Venetian gulph to the white sea, the same gloomy prospect presented itself. Venice once highly commercial, had not only lost her trade, but her government, and had been degraded into a mere province. Geneva and the Tuscan State, had shared the same destiny. France had no external commerce. Spain and Portugal were directing the whole of their energies and resources to save themselves from the yoke prepared for them. Holland formerly the emporium of continental commerce and the seat of great wealth, was annihilated as a nation; and the Northern and Baltic States, were groaning under the anti-commercial system of the dictator of Europe. England alone remained independent and commercial. During the progress of these changes, our Geographical situation



and our neutrality secured to us, not only the profitable trade of the British dominions where our products had no competition in the market, but the remaining commerce of the continent. We profited largely by the calamities which had befallen Europe. The unexampled state of the world, however while it was the source of our prosperity, gave birth to measures on the part of the Belligerents, calculated to affect our rights as a neutral nation. It could in the nature of things not be otherwise. Was it to be expected when the independence of nations, had fallen beneath the hand of power; when every principle of public law and national right, had been prostrated by force in the old world, that we should remain wholly unaffected by these causes? In the situation in which we stood, it became us to consult the maxims of true wisdom, and not hazard the great advantages which we *actually* enjoyed, by hopeless or at best doubtful efforts, to rid ourselves of evils comparatively inconsiderable. We had still great cause of consolation. We had the blessing of peace, which had been banished from every other country, and we had a commerce more extensive and profitable (interrupted as it occasionally was by the orders and decrees of the Belligerents,) than it would have been, had Europe remained in a state of tranquility and peace.

The peaceful policy appeared to me to have still stronger claims to our support. I did not believe it probable in the then state of the world, that we should be able to remove the evils of which we complained. Such had been the extraordinary revolution of affairs, that there were in fact, but two independent nations in Europe. The present ruler of France had prostrated many of the old governments, and curtailed the dominion of others, so that the ancient equilibrium was destroyed, and all the military power of the continent concentrated in his hands; a military power, such as perhaps had never been witnessed. England, the great object of his hatred, was protected against the first onset, by her insular situation, which enabled her to preserve her attitude for the moment. But her ruin too was inevitable, unless she could erect a countervailing power of sufficient magnitude to protect her against the gigantic efforts of her enemy. She sought security in her maritime force, which she increased to an extent before unknown, by which she not only saved herself from conquest, but prostrated the whole naval power opposed to her, and became as sovereign on the ocean as her enemy was on land. In this situation of the world, I thought it a mammoth of folly, for us to forego our peaceful advantages, and enter into a war to enforce respect for neutral rights, which it was the interest of both the belligerents to disregard. Our true policy required that we should (without relinquishing any right) make the most of things we could not alter, and to look to the restoration of independent sovereign communities of Europe, equally interested with ourselves, as the only probable means to re-establish a respect for the rights of nations. Such



an event would have made war unnecessary, because it would have removed the source of our complaints. It will lessen, whenever it shall happen, the apprehension of England for her safety, and with it her naval power, the instrument of her protection. Should such change not have been deemed probable, there were considerations sufficiently urgent, to have prevented us from throwing ourselves into the scale of either of the two great belligerents arrayed in deadly hostility against each other. If we were not blind we ought to have avoided the gulph which had swallowed up every nation who approached it.

These were some of the reasons which influenced me to oppose the war before and at the time it was declared. I then understood the primary cause of that measure to be the orders in council. It never once entered into my imagination, that impressments were considered as originally justifying hostilities, or to require a perseverance in them, after every other cause was removed. The silence of the government on this subject, for years before, forbid such an opinion. I indeed occasionally heard in this house the sufferings of our seamen in "the floating dungeons of England," described in eloquent and pathetic language, but I always considered it merely as a rhetorical flourish, intended to embellish a speech. I sometimes too saw in the columns of certain newspapers the magical number 6257 displayed in large figures, as the number of our impressed seamen, but I did not suppose that any grave statesman who had access to better information, could either believe it, or be influenced, by the inflammatory matter generally subjoined. But it seems I was mistaken. Though the orders in council have long since been removed, the war has been continued and is to be persevered in, as is avowed, until Great-Britain shall relinquish the practice of taking even *her own seamen* from our merchant vessels ; or in other words, until she shall consent that *the flag shall protect all who sail under it*. I cannot consent to subject the country to the many certain evils that will attend the continuance of the war, on any such principles, because I believe the claim set up by administration extends beyond what our interest requires and propriety warrants ; and because I cannot see that we shall be able by force to compel Great-Britain to assent to our demand.

Sir, I should be wanting in candor was I to assert that no inconveniences have been experienced by our citizens from the practice of impressment on board our vessels ; though I believe them to have been greatly magnified. It is like every other power subject to great abuses in the execution. There are besides causes resulting from our situation and language, which during a part of the present war, rendered the best efforts of the officers entrusted with the power, not to violate our rights, sometimes abortive. The extent and prosperity of our commerce, and the pressure of the war on England, induced many of her sea-faring subjects to leave her service, public and private, and seek easier employment



and better wages on board of our ships, where they were much wanted, and to which they were often allured by the cupidity of our people. The government of Great-Britain, conceiving their aid necessary in the defence of their native country, instructed the officers of her navy to reclaim them, whenever found on board neutral private vessels. The identity of language and manners, however, rendered it often difficult to distinguish between them and our native citizens, and without any improper design, the latter were sometimes taken. The difficulty too, was of itself calculated to encourage abuses. But could the inconveniences and even abuses, to which we were subjected, warrant the demand to abandon the practice, if it was well founded? All we could require was *security for our own seamen*, leaving to Great Britain the service of her subjects. Some remedy, calculated to secure both, ought to have been attempted, by friendly negociation, instead of insisting on a principle which, though it may effect our convenience, leaves the interest of others to be sacrificed. Justice would be satisfied with a remedy commensurate with the evil. What would be thought of the demand of a neutral to be exempt from search in all cases, because the cruisers of a belligerent, under the pretence of searching for enemy's property and contraband of war, committed depredations on the property of her citizens? or that the belligerent should abstain from taking enemies in arms from her ships, because under color of that right, some of her own people were carried into captivity?

I shall not on this occasion enter into an examination of the principles on which the practice of Great-Britain, thus to reclaim her subjects is founded, or how far intrinsically it does, or does not, constitute a right belonging to every sovereign nation. It is enough for us to know that it is not of new origin, (as has been asserted by some gentlemen,) but that it has been exercised for more than a century, not only by her, but many other maritime nations, as was most clearly shewn in a former debate in this house by the production of the orders of the British admiralty and the marine ordinances of other European states. It is certainly too early for us to attempt to expunge from the practice of nations a principle in which all others have hitherto acquiesced.

There is a principle connected with this subject, for which the administration contends, which shews that the security of our *native* seamen is not their only object, but that their policy extends to the protection of British subjects against the reclamation of their native sovereign from our merchant vessels. Indeed they have lately gone further than the principle originally assumed, seemed to embrace. They have pledged themselves to protect those taken in arms fighting against their country, even at the expense of the blood of our own native citizens. Why this solicitude for the interest and safety of foreigners? Is our native population not competent for all the purposes of national happiness?



Is the world to be told that we cannot sustain the contest with our enemy, without arraying against him his own subjects and protecting them in treason? I think not so meanly of my country. I believe the period has arrived, when we ought to rely, at least so far as respects *all political and external purposes* on our own native population. I would not withdraw from foreigners the privilege of seeking among us an asylum from the poverty or tyranny of their own country. I would ever bestow on them *every civil right* enjoyed by natives, and within our territory extend to them protection against every power on earth. But I would let it be distinctly understood, that when they left our soil, their right to that protection should cease. I would not permit them to embroil us with any foreign power claiming their allegiance after they had left our shores. I would go further; I would not permit those who should hereafter emigrate to our country, to meddle with the concerns of government in any manner whatever. It is not in the nature of things, that those whose habits and opinions in early life, have been formed for an opposite state of things, should know how to use or to appreciate, the rights and duties, of a citizen who possesses a portion of the political power of his country. I know such a regulation would exclude some valuable men, but it would exclude also a mass of corruption and ignorance dangerous to the purity of our institutions. With respect to this system of retaliation, to which the administration have pledged themselves, be the blood that shall flow on their own heads. I would not voluntarily shed one single drop of native American blood for all the foreign population we have acquired for the last fifteen years, or which we shall acquire for a century.

But the principle has been advanced, and very generally supported, that we stand pledged to those who have been naturalized under our laws, to protect them, wherever they may think proper to go, even against the claim of their native sovereign when within his jurisdiction; to whom it is said the duties of allegiance are to all intents and purposes dissolved, by the process of naturalization. This opinion, like many other doctrines of the day, is not pretended to be supported by reasoning drawn from the nature of government, or the rights and duties resulting from a state of society; but some fanciful theories, some abstract notions about the laws of nature are presented to us as its basis. It is said that Congress are authorized to establish an uniform system of naturalization; that they have by law prescribed the requisites to which foreigners must conform, and when they do so, (as there is no limitation) they become citizens to *every possible extent*. This is plausible, but not the less incorrect. The error consists, in misconceiving the nature and effect of municipal law. The convention who framed, and the people who adopted the constitution, did certainly not conceive the absurdity that they could invest Congress with the power of making laws which should operate *beyond our jurisdiction*. They



granted the power to pass laws for the naturalization of foreigners, to have the effect of *other municipal laws*, confined in their operation to the territorial jurisdiction of the country, *where we are sovereign*. When a foreigner therefore is naturalized, he becomes entitled to the benefits and subject to the duties, which municipal law can bestow in the one case, and exact in the other ; but nothing more. To contend, that municipal laws can have an extraterritorial effect, is to contend that one nation can repeal the laws of another and interpolate its own regulations into the principles of public law.

The doctrine of original native allegiance which cannot be abandoned but with the consent of the sovereign, to whom it is due, which is the law of Great Britain, and most other European States, is founded on the same principles. The rights and duties which it embraces, are the offspring of municipal law. The claim upon the subjects allegiance, can only be *enforced* where the sovereign has jurisdiction. This doctrine is not in conflict (even in theory) with the practice of naturalization. And when well understood, can produce no *practical* collisions. Thus for instance, a British subject emigrates to this country, where he becomes naturalized. So long as he remains here, he is entitled to the rights, and subject to the duties of an American citizen, because he is within the protection of our laws, limited in their effect by the limits of our territory. But when he returns to his native country, or goes on the high seas, where *for certain purposes, and to a certain extent* all nations have *common jurisdiction*, his original allegiance revives, or rather the means to make it operative are revived, and he is to every intent restored to the character of a British subject, because he is *within the legitimate influence* of the laws of the community, of which he was *first* a member, and which had never absolved him from his duties. All conflicting obligations which he has contracted while here, are suspended until he returns.

It is contended however that the doctrine of perpetual allegiance violates the principles of natural law, which authorise every one to pursue his happiness *where* he deems it best attainable. To me it seems preposterous to talk about natural right, *in connection with this subject* for if it proves any thing, it proves that there is no allegiance due to any country ; a man may go when and where he pleases ; and in relation to the community from which he emigrates the moment he leaves them, he may become their enemy ; an absurdity which I am sure none will countenance. Allegiance is not known in the natural state—It has its origin in the institutions of society and must therefore be exclusively a matter of social regulation ; the object of which in relation to every subject is to *restrict* the conduct of individuals, to such limits as the welfare of the community, *in the opinion of those to whom the right to judge is confided*, may require. The idea of natural right in opposition to the duties in a social state, is at war with all government. It is the natural right of the strong, to re-



dress his injuries by the exercise of his physical powers ; but how preposterous would *such a defence* be where the personal rights of the weak were violated, even in the rudest societies ? There is indeed a principle of natural law connected with this subject, but which instead of supporting the *individual* right claimed, is in direct hostility to it. I mean nature's first law pervading all animated beings ; *the right of self preservation*. Every community has the unquestionable right, to preserve and perpetuate itself. And the means to effect it, as well as the time and manner of applying them, cannot be left to individual judgment, but the discretion of those in whom the sovereign power resides. Hence it has the right, to declare that no one shall abandon his native soil in times of great calamity, when the existence of the society is threatened by a powerful enemy, and when all the aid of its members is required to make a successful resistance ; To declare that though he may leave his native soil and pursue his happiness in foreign climes, he shall never be permitted to turn his arms against the country that gave him birth ; or adopt any other regulation that may tend to preserve its security. Without this power, every community is at the mercy of another, who may hold out inducements to detach its members ; and thus by lessening the number on the one hand, and increasing it on the other, ultimately subjugate and destroy it.

Sir, I do not only believe, that in a state of society no such right of which I have spoken, claimed for individuals, does exist, but that it never, ought or can exist, consistent with the principles of sound morality. Godwin laid it down, as a principle of political justice, that a child was under no duty of gratitude to its parents. That the anxiety attending its childhood ; the cares of its infancy ; the trouble and expense of rearing it into active life, imposed no moral obligation which required any return. Hence it follows that the son might without violating any *duty* desert his aged parents, surrounded with poverty and distress, to be provided for by the charity of others. Of the same character, do the opinions appear to me, which are now afloat, that a man is under no obligation of gratitude to his native country ; that he may abandon it in the hour of danger, and leave to diminished numbers the perils and evils of defending it against a powerful and ruthless enemy ; nay, that he may even return in their ranks, to assist in its destruction, and stain his native soil with the blood of his parents and kindred. These anti-social opinions may suit present purposes : but they are revolting to my nature. I cannot and never will subscribe to them, or assist in giving them any countenance.

There was a period in our history but recently past, when this doctrine might have recoiled upon us, and covered this country with irretrievable ruin. We have seen in our day, on the continent of Europe a military power arise, such as the world never witnessed, which had prostrated every thing within its reach, and



was grasping at every thing that yet bore the name of independence. England alone maintained her erect attitude. Her naval power constituted the only remaining barrier to universal dominion; for Russia, though not conquered had at one time been compelled to bow, to the wishes of hers, and the world's enemy. Those who had paid any attention to the progress of events, and the character of that gigantic ambition which manifested itself in the person of him, who seemed to have drawn within his grasp the power of Europe, could have very little doubt that nothing short of the government of the world would satisfy his wishes. I confess for myself that I was not without serious apprehension for the fate of my own country, when I saw such an accumulation of power in the hands of one individual, particularly at the period when he was passing the Niemen at the head of the most powerful and best appointed armies of modern times, to give the death blow to the Independence of Russia. Suppose he had succeeded and the accumulated pressure on England whose manly resistance had aroused all the malignant feelings of his nature, and whose destruction was the first object of his heart, had been forced to yield. What would have been our situation? We should have been compelled to have had recourse to that love of native country which seems to be considered as no virtue (at least no duty,) to save us from subjugation; or voluntarily submit to the yoke. Suppose while his legions were collecting on the other side of the Atlantic to embark for our shores, but before actual war existed, a portion of our population, in expectation of what was to follow, thought it better "to seek their happiness" elsewhere, than remain subject to the dangers of our situation, and the privations and inconveniences attending a manly struggle, should have attempted to leave their country at such a period of difficulty. Where is the American who could say, who dare utter the sentiment, that it was a natural right, and that they must be permitted thus to desert their native soil in the hour of calamity? Suppose a portion of them thought it proper to unite with the enemy, before his attempt upon us was known, and to turn in his ranks and give every aid to his efforts to subjugate the country of their birth; the land of their fathers. Where is the man who would have the presumption to pronounce such conduct innocent? And yet the principle adopted by the administration and supported in this house, goes to the full extent of justifying such treasonable acts towards another nation committed by subjects.

I have heard it said, that though every government has the right to prevent the emigration of its people, yet if it permits them to leave its territory, they become completely absolved from every duty towards it, for all future times; because with its assistance they are placed in situations where it is possible obligations would be created conflicting with every pre-existing claim. And the



fore, that the permission to leave the soil is an act on the part of the sovereign, which though *restricted and conditional in terms* is *in effect an absolute renunciation*, of the claim of allegiance. There is not even plausibility in this idea, and certainly no nation in any period of the world, ever countenanced it by its practice. That the sovereign should have the right to *prevent* emigration *entirely*—and not to define the objects, for which the subject may emigrate, or to prescribe conditions is not supported by an correct principle. The power to interdict an act, include necessarily, the power to regulate it, and prescribe such limits as are deemed necessary. It seems to me a strange position, that when a person is permitted to leave his own country for a particular temporary purpose, it should be converted into a right, not only to go where his inclination leads him, and return divested of every duty ; but to return as a public enemy. The sovereign authority of a country may not deem it necessary to restrict its people to their native soil, but permit them to pursue their interest in foreign climates ; but is it reasonable or just to construe this act of lenity into a licence to associate themselves with those who make war upon it, without committing any offence ? Surely not. Should conflicting duties be created, by a person thus permitted to emigrate, it is not the fault of his native sovereign but his own, and therefore the act must be at his peril. There are, however, now if any cases, where they could arise. Because the party abroad in merely rendering obedience to the laws of the country where he is resident, is discharging the duties of local allegiance, which by the public law of nations every one owes to the sovereign in whose dominions he resides. A British subject here before the war, therefore, may be required to defend this country against British forces, and his doing so will not subject him to any punishment if he should fall into their hands, *because the act not voluntary*.

Those who have precipitated us into our present unfortunate and ruinous situation, demand of us to yield the *means which they all prescribe*, as necessary to ensure a *vigorous* and successful prosecution of the war, the only hope, as they say, of a speedy and honorable peace, the professed object of all. When we enquire how all this is to be effected, we are answered, that the means asked will enable them to subdue Canada and every thing else will follow. And this infatuation increases as experience unfolds its want of wisdom. Sir, could I believe that your efforts could procure such a result, much as I deprecate the evils which inevitably will attend the continuance of the war, I would give you all the aid in my power. To obtain peace, honorable peace ! for this bleeding country, I would make almost any sacrifice. But I cannot yield my own opinions to the promises of gentlemen, particularly when every day's occurrences prove their correctness ; while they prove the mistake, want of foresight, or want of wisdom, on



the part of those who set up this high claim to our confidence. In one object I will unite with them ; in the defence of our country. I shall not enquire by whose temerity the enemy has been brought to our doors ; or whose imprudence has invited hostility on our soil. Nor shall I consider either the expense, or the consequences of making every effort, when the occasion shall require resistance. I shall grant the means so far as depends on me to the utmost ability of the country. But as it respects the operations in the territory of the enemy I must be permitted to consider them not as dictated by imperious necessity, but a subject on which the exercise of a sound discretion is admissible.

What is the prospect which gentlemen have it in their power to present to our view, to afford us any hope that they will be able to obtain their object? Is there any thing in the past which is calculated to encourage a perseverance in the course they have commenced? Turn your eyes to the events of the two campaigns, which have been wasted since the declaration of war to obtain possession of the Canadas, at the expense of incalculable sums of money and many lives, and see whether you can discover any thing that would justify those who are not committed, to abandon their opinions. It is true that just before your troops retired into winter quarters last November, the movements of your armies and the promises of the friends of administration, excited expectation in the public mind that before the end of the campaign the British power in both provinces would be prostrate, and the whole (except Quebec) in your possession ; but it is equally true that your troops were compelled to leave the enemy's territories with diminished numbers, without accomplishing any single object. You were told too, (after every hope had been blasted,) in this place, by the chief magistrate of the nation that our arms had been successful "both on the land and on the water." But in a few weeks thereafter you had the distressing intelligence, that the small remnant of your forces between the lakes were driven from their position at Fort George, and that the whole Niagara frontier, for many miles into the country, was laid waste by a merciless, and victorious enemy, who, exasperated by the vindictive and cruel acts of your commander, had executed vengeance on the innocent women and children, who could not fly in the inclement season of winter to a place of safety. Thus in one month after the campaign *was closed on your part*, all the advantages you had gained during its whole progress, and much more, were lost. You have, it is true, about Lake Erie, some stragglers who maintain nominal possession of the country for you, but I venture to say that if they do not retire they will be in captivity before spring, and I should not be surprised if the whole Michigan Territory should again fall into the hands of your enemy.

These were the consequences of your offensive operations in Canada, at a period when circumstances existed which may



considered highly advantageous to your efforts. I believe it most unquestionably true, that the government of Great Britain did not entertain any serious apprehensions, that you would resort to war, and of course no preparations suited to such an emergency were made, while on the other hand, you had determined on that event for months before it was declared, and put your preparations in a state of progression. The declaration of war, produced an ardour which excited many at first into service, which vanishes when the novelty wears away, and is already languishing. Besides pressed as your enemy hitherto has been, by the great European contest particularly the war in the Peninsula, his means of defence and annoyance so far as you are concerned must necessarily have been less, than if all his resources could have been directed against you alone. The events which have lately taken place on the other side of the Atlantic, have changed the aspect of affairs so essentially, that it is not unreasonable, to suppose that Great Britain will think of the security of her provinces, the immediate object of your hostilities, by adding to the means of their defence, and thereby increase the difficulties which hitherto have been sufficient to render abortive every effort you have made.

Sir, if you are not incapable of profiting by experience, the occurrences since the war, ought to convince you that our soil is not favorable to the production of materials for conquest and military power. The enviable equality of our situation; the general happiness of our people; and the reward which honest industry everywhere receives, leaves but a small portion of your population to fill the ranks of your armies. Few if any, in ordinary times are driven into them by necessity. Who is there that regrets it? Is there any one who has any claim to be ranked among the friends of the country, who would exchange these blessings for all the military power ever possessed by any nation, with its invariable concomitants, poverty and slavery? I venture to say there is not. When I took occasion two years ago to state it as my conviction, that the sons of our farmers and other respectable young men, would not enter the ranks of your army, the sentiment met with general disapprobation, on the other side of the house, as degrading to the patriotism of the country. Patriotism at that day was to effect every thing; It seemed to be thought necessary rather to repress than to excite it! How much have gentlemen been mistaken? experience has shewn them ignorant of the first principles of political science—ignorant of the character and situation of the people whose interests are committed to their hands. Scarcely had the first moments of the war passed away, before gentlemen found that patriotism *alone* would not fill your ranks, but that it must be *stimulated* by interest. They then added considerably to the bounty and pay of the army, as a mean to effect their purpose—of the success of which they had not the smallest doubt. But the failure of the last campaign proved them again mistaken. They



have now directed themselves entirely to the *cupidity* of your people who are to be allured into your army by the enormous bounty, lately authorised, of one hundred and twenty four dollars and one hundred and sixty acres of land to each recruit. Even that will not do. It is necessary in order to secure this object so near the hearts of gentlemen—(an army sufficient to subdue Canada,) to throw a portion of the laborious classes out of their accustomed employments, so that *necessity* shall bring about what *cupidity* cannot effect. Sir, about the period of the declaration of war, I saw a paragraph in a leading print devoted to the administration recommending to congress the adoption of measures calculated to create distress among the people, as a measure indispensable to fill the army. The profligacy of the sentiment impressed me with horror and indignation. I did not however believe it possible, that it ever could receive any countenance from those whose duty it was to ward off calamity, and secure general happiness. Nor do I now pretend to say that gentlemen *have acted in obedience to this recommendation*; or that, they have been stimulated by *such motives* in the pursuit of their policy. I hope no man is so corrupt. *But the fact is that such a state of things does now exist.* All seafaring persons, and the poorer classes in the commercial towns, immediately dependant on commerce, are placed in a situation where their industry no longer can secure them bread. And to save themselves and their families from starving or subsisting on charity, they are compelled to enter your armies. To every mind not bent on the pursuit of its object, without reflection, these things will afford strong admonitions, at least to pause. Who can remain under the delusion of conquest and military glory with such facts before his eyes? or who can deem the objects in contest worthy the sacrifices demanded? No nation can long continue a conflict with such enormous expenditures as you encounter. Your measures instead of displaying your strength, exhibit your weakness and tend rather to encourage than, to dismay your enemy. Because he must know that they cannot last long.

Suppose, however, at the expense of the immense sacrifices you are making, you shall be enabled to overrun the enemy's provinces and ultimately subdue them: what then? Are you certain that you will thereby secure the object of this war; or obtain something equivalent? If the principle, the relinquishment of which you demand, is so important to Great-Britain as to justify her in maintaining it, at the expence of a war into which, it is evident, she entered reluctantly, is it to be expected that she will barter it for Canada? That she will yield a great maritime right (as she estimates it) for the restoration of a colony which hitherto has been of little value to her? But with the well known pride of that nation, is it reasonable to suppose, that she will permit you to sever her empire, without making the greatest efforts to regain possession of the conquered part—particularly with the unanimity of her coun-



cils and her people, which supports her in this war? She will make those efforts. She will do more. She will harrass our extended and unprotected coast with increased activity. Should she be relieved from the pressure of her European war, as appears probable, her naval power and her liberated land forces, drawn from other services, will give sufficient employment to all your means, and by protracted efforts, if not by immediate force, she will teach you even in Canada, that you are engaged in an "unprofitable contest," and thus render you disposed to abandon the field of conquest, after you had been fully in possession of it.

This war has certainly been attended with some very extraordinary appearances, and the consequences, should it continue, will be still more extraordinary. It has been waged for the freedom of commerce; and scarcely were we on the threshold, when all commerce, if not annihilated, was entirely suspended, and your ships chained to the wharves. The security of your seamen *on the high seas*, was made another great object. They are now interdicted the ocean and turned on the land. In a few years your ships will be rotten, or eaten by the worms; your commercial capital will have sought other employment; your seamen will have gone into foreign service, or turned landmen; so that by one mighty effort of wisdom, the *ruin* of your commerce is converted into a *mean to secure its freedom*; and driving your seamen from the ocean, or out of your service, seems an appropriate remedy for the protection of their rights. Thus at the end of the war, the freedom of our commerce, and the security of our seamen, will have become mere abstract propositions. With such prospects, I cannot give my aid to support the war *offensively* for a single moment. I will not co-operate in measures pregnant with such consequences.

An honorable member from South-Carolina, (Mr. Calhoun,) however, has told us, that this war on your part is defensive, and therefore that the minority are bound by their own principles, to support it. To come at this novel conclusion, he has referred to the *causes* which provoked it, and insisted that as it was waged in *defence* of just rights, its *character was therefore defensive*. This argument, if it is entitled to the name, proves that in this war both parties are on the defensive, because Great-Britain asserts that the *defence of her maritime rights* and of her territories, compels her to resist your claims, and your hostilities; and she certainly has as much right to give character to her acts and motives as you have to characterise yours. The gentleman's doctrine, if true, goes still further. *It proves that no civilized nation ever did wage offensive war*. Examine the pages of history, and shew me an instance where the most unprovoked hostilities were not attended with some justification. To redress some past injury; to enforce some unquestionable right; to obviate some expected evil; are the state pretexts, that have in all times been employed to give



colour to unjust attacks. When the king of Prussia, in 1756, in the midst of profound peace, entered Saxony with an immense army, he acted, as he asserted from motives of self-defence, to defeat the designs of his enemies. The unprincipled partition of Poland in 1792, was justified in an elaborate manifesto, issued by the powers concerned, on the ground that the dissensions and disorders, in that country threatened the repose of Europe, particularly of the neighboring nations, and that the measure adopted was indispensable, not only to restore general tranquillity, but to preserve their dominions from the effects of those disorders. The cause avowed by the great Napoleon, to justify hostilities against Russia, about the time we commenced ours against her ally, according to the honorable member, converted the most arrogant attempt upon the sovereignty of a nation, into justifiable and defensive war. What could be more imposing and better calculated to justify such an act than the object pretended—of rescuing Europe from the commercial shackles with which England had fettered it? He like the supporters of this war fought in defence of the rights of commerce and seamen, if you take his word for it. Sir, the character of a war, according to the received opinions of all writers, is offensive on the part of the nation who authorises the first unequivocal and professed act of war, whatever the provocation or motive may be. It may be just or unjust, but still it is offensive war. We authorised the first acts of hostility; the war therefore is offensive on our part, though *in relation to our enemy*, it may be just.

Gentlemen in the minority have on every occasion, not only bestowed censure on the conduct of the minority, but have attributed to *their* opposition, the failure of all their measures. Sir, what has been the character and effect of the opposition, of which we hear so much and which is loaded with so much opprobrium? Has it in any instance driven you from your object? Has the adoption of any measure connected with your policy been defeated by it? Have you not at your command, the sword and the purse of this nation, in the use of which *according to your own will* you cannot be controuled? Or do we not render a constitutional obedience to all your laws? How then can our opposition be stigmatized, either as improper or injurious? In what does it really consist? In nothing more than in the *expression of our sentiments*, as the representatives of a portion of the people, on the great questions in which their present and future welfare is deeply involved. This is the sum of our opposition on this floor. And who is there that dare pronounce the exercise of this right improper? For myself, like my honorable friend from New Hampshire, (Mr. Webster,) the more it shall be denied me; the more determined I shall be to exercise and maintain it. *It shall as far as I am concerned*, not have the sanction which hereafter might be claimed, from its abandonment. But why are the friends of administration



so sensitive on this subject? Have they any thing to apprehend from our efforts thus restricted, if truth is on their side? Those *only* who love darkness fear the light; Or will they assert that the people are so destitute of discrimination, that they will mistake falsehood for truth, and sophistry for reason? They surely will not in the face of their own maxim, "that error is harmless when truth is left free to combat it," make any such assertion; Or do gentlemen assume the broad ground, that though our statements are correct, and our reasoning just; yet as they are calculated to weaken the efforts of the government, it is improper that the people should be informed of the state of *their affairs*, and of the tendency of public measures? Whatever may be privately thought, I am sure no *public countenance* will be given to such a sentiment.

An honorable member from South-Carolina, (Mr. Calhoun) however, told us the other day, that though opposition in a free country is not only admissible, but sometimes salutary, yet when it degenerates into faction, it becomes dangerous to public liberty, and threatens the very existence of government; and he has referred us to the history of ancient and modern republics, for proof that the factious spirit of opposition was the cause of their downfall. The gentleman is entirely mistaken. It was not the factious spirit of minorities, that caused the overthrow of those republics. It was the factious spirit of those who had the *active* power of government in their hands, that proved fatal to them. It is that which is the most dangerous to the liberties of every country. I do not pretend to say that a spirit of faction (by which I understand a subserviency to sinister views at the expense of every public duty) has not sometimes pervaded minorities. But I do say, that most generally it has been the offspring of the violent measures of majorities, and that it is less frequent, and less dangerous, with those who *oppose*, than those who *direct* the course of public measures. A minority is a passive body. Its importance in a free government is derived from the apparent, or real abuses of the active power, and its operations are directed solely to the *public sentiment*. If they become violent and factious, it is generally because extraordinary *means* have been afforded, and extraordinary provocations given, by their adversaries. A majority on the other hand unite in themselves the whole sovereign authority, which they may exercise *uncontrolled by public sentiment*, to every extent. And who is there, that understands the character of the human heart, who does not know that the temptations of power are often too strong to submit to the restraints of public interest and public duty? Those who "feel power forget right."

If we consult the history of past times, particularly of that country whose institutions we have in a great degree imitated, and whose character is not very unlike our own, we shall see the opinions here advanced, strongly supported. We shall see, that in



England, minorities of whatever political description, have most generally supported principles friendly to popular rights; while majorities almost invariably have adopted measures, calculated to strengthen their power and destroy their adversaries, at the expense of civil liberty. I could present to you a long catalogue of examples. But lest I should tire your patience, I will merely refer to one—the attainder of Sir John Fenwick in the reign of William the 3d. It will be recollected that the whigs had then the ascendancy in the councils of that country; men who in the reign of James the 2d, had opposed the arbitrary doctrines of the day—“*passive obedience and non-resistance*”—doctrines which have been revived in this country, and advocated in this house. They had not only opposed their *votes and their opinions* but *their arms* to the measures of government; and by their union and energy brought about the event, which has since been hailed as a “*glorious revolution*.” Yet how did *they* act when flushed with power? In the case to which I referred, they attainted the accused of treason, on the *ex parte* affidavit of *one* witness, and the *hearsay* evidence of two grand-jurors, who recited what they heard *another* say; in the very teeth of the statute of Edward III, and in contempt of every principle, which secured the liberty of the subject. And who opposed this arbitrary and execrable proceeding? The tories—the very men who had supported the measures of the preceeding reign to their fullest extent. This fact shews, *how consistently parties have acted in that country*. And it would be vain indeed to attempt to prove, by our political history that the party who have succeeded to power here are more regardful of their professions. I have lived long enough to learn that there is no essential difference between *political parties*, except so far as individual virtue and talents go. They all act very much alike under like circumstances. Those who have the reigns of government in their hands, will abuse their power, whenever they think, they are firmly seated in the public confidence, and nothing but the vigilance of the people, which the opposition, of a minority, is calculated to keep alive, can save them from the profligacy and corruption to which it will naturally tend.

An honorable member from Tennessee, (Mr. Grundy,) seems to admit that temperate opposition on this floor, is not improper. But he bestows severe reprehension on certain acts, done out of this house, tending to defeat the measures of administration. His fancy has created an offence, which he calls moral treason, hitherto unknown to any code, established to regulate the conduct of man. Though its name is known to every one, yet we are *all* ignorant how it is composed, or what is its essence. When we ask, does it consist in the violation of any law? We are answered, that it does not. When we ask, whether disobedience to the dictates of conscience, constitutes any ingredient—we receive the same answer. When we demand to know what it really is, the



answer contains such refined, metaphysical reasoning that we are still left to conjecture. This new-fangled, this sublimated offence, without body, or soul, without any resting place on this earth, is conjured up by the gentleman, whenever he rises in his place to address you.

The honorable member has disclaimed the merit of the original discovery, and very disinterestedly bestowed it on another. But I presume if he is not the inventor, he certainly has improved on the idea, and according to the rules of the patent office, is entitled to a patent for his *improvement*; which will give him the *exclusive* enjoyment of all its benefits. He has referred us to Dr. Wither-  
 spoon as the original inventor, who, it seems, at the commencement of the revolutionary contest, addressed his Scottish brethren in America, and exhorted them to aid in the cause of the colonies against the mother country. To illustrate his idea of their duty in the then crisis, he supposes a vessel at sea in distress, which required the *aid of all on board*, to bring her into a port of safety; he supposes a *minority* of the crew, not only to refuse any aid themselves, but counteracting by every thing in their power the efforts of their companions; and he asks whether the *majority* would in such case not throw them overboard, to save themselves from inevitable destruction? The gentleman's authority proves too much. If, as he supposes, our situation is like that of the crew in distress, why not go the full length of the remedy then applied, and *throw the minority overboard*. To this I have no doubt the gentleman would resort if he was not afraid. Perhaps there might be danger in the experiment. Sir, the authority cited, has no kind of connection with our present situation. Dr. Wither-  
 spoon applied his hypothetical case to the then state of the country. When we, as a portion of the British Empire, attempted forcibly to separate ourselves from the dominion of the parent state, the law of nature, which is the law of force, was the only rule for our conduct. Hence the majority had a right to resort to every mean their physical power gave them, to secure their object. But what is our situation now? We have a government to which *all* are parties, and by which the rights of *all* are secured. Among them is the right belonging to every one, to investigate public measures and to speak of them as they may appear to merit, and this right extends to every possible act, short of meditated resistance to the laws.

The honourable gentleman has lately stated some particular acts, which in his opinion amount to moral treason—such as persuading persons not to enlist in the army; or not to loan their money to the government. I cannot see any thing improper in this, unless the act involved a violation of some duty, which is dictated by conscience. For myself, though I should not conceive either it criminal, or immoral, I have never interposed my advice in any of the supposed cases. I have never advised any person not



to enlist, because, I do not recollect that any one, for whose welfare I felt much interest ever wished to take such a step. Those who enlisted where I am acquainted, were generally persons who rendered a service to their neighbourhood by leaving it. I have never persuaded any one not to lend his money, because my constituents (and the gentleman's) have no occasion for such advice—they have very little to lend.

Gentlemen in the majority, have frequently invited us to an union of effort in the cause in which we are engaged; by which I understand, that we are to abandon *our* opinions, though every days experience proves their correctness, and subscribe to the infallibility of *theirs*, overwhelmed as they are with disappointments. Union in promoting our country's good is highly desirable; but union in accelerating its ruin is worse than any division. There are occasions when I would relinquish opinions not fully matured—there are others, when I could yield them to the counsels of wisdom, to which experience had given a high sanction. But gentlemen will pardon me, when I declare that I have no confidence whatever in their counsels. Though as individuals, I respect many of them, as honorable men and men of talents; yet I think their political views at war with the best interests of this nation. There is not one single prominent act of administration connected with our foreign relations for some years past, which I do not believe fundamentally wrong. They have led us step by step into our present difficulties, while every new experiment was attended by new promises. For myself therefore, had I any weight, I should deem it my duty to impede, rather than accelerate your progress in this down hill course of ruin.

Permit me to take a short review of the most important public transaction since the commencement of our difficulties abroad. I will lead your attention no further back than to the period when the treaty negotiated by Messrs. Munroe and Pinkney with Great-Britain, was rejected by the President; because it always has appeared to me that that act was the foundation of all the evils which have since befallen this country. I do most sincerely believe that had it been ratified, we should not only this day enjoy the blessings of peace, but have little (if any) cause of complaint against our present enemy. It had been negotiated under circumstances as favorable as any America could wish; circumstances, which once passed, might never return. Its provisions, though not such as they would have been, had we had it in our power to dictate the terms, were more favorable than those of the treaty of 1794, which had received the sanction of Washington, and under which we so eminently prospered. They were "honorable and advantageous to the United States," in the opinion of our ministers, now members of the cabinet. But it was indignantly rejected by the President, and gentlemen who now constitute the majority approved his conduct. It was supposed that the situation of Great-Britain



would compel her to submit to any terms administration should dictate; or if she would not, it was better to have "no treaty." Gentlemen were mistaken in both. They could obtain no better terms; and the effect of having "no treaty," we now witness in the calamities of the country.

After gentlemen had foregone the advantages of negotiation, they set about to invent, and apply their own remedies to cure the disorders of the body politic. The embargo was the first that succeeded the rejection of the treaty. It was hailed by administration and its friends as wonderfully efficacious, not only as a remedy but as a preservative. It was to *coerce* the belligerents (or rather Great-Britain) into an abandonment of their injurious policy, and to preserve us from war. After the experiment had been made, sufficiently long to evince its preposterous absurdity, and to occasion loud complaints in many parts of the union, it was abandoned, and a commercial non-intercourse with the dominions of the two great belligerents, substituted. This measure was adopted, not because a majority were convinced of the inefficacy of the embargo, but because the people would not bear it any longer. To this very day, "all true believers" are firmly persuaded that it would have been effectual had it been continued, or had it not been violated. This proves to me that they do not understand the character of a free people—or of a free government. A free people will not long submit to great privation, the necessity of which they cannot comprehend. And in a free government, where the laws are necessarily mild, you cannot enforce regulations militating against the general habits, and interests of the community without changing it in reality into a despotism. Napoleon could not execute his anti-commercial system among the people in Holland until he placed every individual under the controul of military power. This is the only mean which can execute an embargo in this country. And of this, it seems, the majority are convinced, as they have lately adopted it themselves.

After the non-intercourse had been in operation, long enough to subject our farmers and planters, to at least ten millions of dollars loss in the sales of their produce, burthened with the expence of double freight, and double insurance, I thought I saw a strong disposition in this house, to get clear of it by some means. But it could not be abandoned, consistent with the policy which had been adopted, as long as the Belligerent edicts continued, without *substituting* something in its stead. A SUBSTITUTE seemed with the majority to be indispensable. A SUBSTITUTE was the rage, but what it should be no person could tell. I recollect about that time, an honorable member from Virginia, (Mr. Gholson) whose ardour and honesty in the cause, I very much admire, in accents of despair exclaimed, What! No Embargo! No Non-intercourse! No Substitute. As if the destinies of the nation, hung upon one or the other. At length however "*a substitute*" was



brought into the house by an honorable member from North-Carolina, (Mr. Macon) of a very innocent and harmless character, afterwards baptized "Macon's Bill No. I." By its provisions, the merchant vessels of Great Britain and France, were to be excluded from our harbours entirely, but commercial intercourse in every other respect was permitted with those powers. I was friendly to its passage ; not because I believed it was calculated to coerce the belligerents, or even induce Great-Britain to retaliate, but I thought it well enough to throw into the hands of our own people, the whole profits of carrying our products, as Great-Britain had not been friendly towards us. As to France she was out of the question, as none of her ships visited our ports. But above all other reasons, the conviction, that the majority must have a "*substitute*," was the most cogent, to influence me, to support the bill. I feared that if they could not get *that*, which was perfectly harmless, they might adopt *some* other that would do mischief. It passed this house, but was unfortunately rejected in the Senate. I say "unfortunately," because I believe it probable, had it become a law, we should have got clear of the restrictive system, and perhaps this day have been at peace.

After this bill was, rejected a new "substitute" was in demand. But what it would be, or what it ought to be, seemed to be the question. Ultimately some one more sagacious than the rest [who it was I know not to this day] discovered that the only way was—to induce *one* of the belligerents to relinquish his injurious measures by promises of resistance against the other should he continue his—and that other would follow his example ; or if he did not, you had then an opportunity, of directing against him alone the whole force of your power, which the course marked out in the report of the committee of foreign relations in 1808—9, forbids against *either*, as long as they *both* continued to injure you. A bill was reported, containing provisions calculated (as was supposed) to secure one of these objects, called Macon's Bill No. 2, which was finally passed into a law on the first of May 1810.

In the progress of the bill through this house, its friends manifested great expectations. They seemed to believe that they had fallen upon a most fortunate expedient, calculated to obtain respect for our commercial rights by exciting in the belligerents a spirit of emulation, to precede each other, in ceasing to injure us. The infatuation, for I can call it nothing else, pervaded the most intelligent who were friendly to the administration. I recollect to have heard in conversation an honorable member from Massachusetts, of considerable talents, then a member of this house, declare that the bill provided a certain remedy for the difficulties under which we then labored. I was astonished to hear *him* make such a declaration—because it appeared to me, that every one, who



had paid any attention to the character and wishes of the French government, could see in this measure the seeds of the evils, of which such an abundant harvest has since fallen to our lot. It was the very measure which afforded full scope to the deception and chicanery of the French cabinet, to draw us from our neutral attitude, and such has been the effect. Scarcely had the act of the 1st May been received at Paris, when the toils were spread, and the administration were caught. I wish I could believe they were unwillingly caught. The President, on the 2d of November 1810, announced, on the authority of the letter of the Duke of Cadore of the 5th of August preceding, that the decrees of Berlin and Milan were revoked—an assertion, to say the best of it, which has never been supported by any proper evidence, and about which men differ according to their political opinions. The consequence was, that in relation to Great-Britain, the non-intercourse was put in force, and the ground of impartiality abandoned, to which the administration had always professed rigidly to adhere.

But it was not to be expected, that we should long remain in the situation in which, that act placed us. It was the natural forerunner of stronger measures. As the fact had been asserted, that France had ceased to violate our rights, and Great Britain alone remained unjust; another step became indispensable, as soon as public opinion was ripe for it. Accordingly, at the commencement of the session in Nov. 1811. The president recommended to us, “an armour and an attitude suited to the occasion;” A large army was accordingly voted, under the impression, I believe, that Great Britain had counted on our pacific policy, in which it was necessary to undeceive her, by war like preparations, when she would do us justice. The war was ultimately declared. And we were flattered, with the most extravagant promises of its speedy, and successful termination. As to the subjugation of Canada, that was almost too unimportant, to detain gentlemen in their career of glory. I recollect an honorable member from South Carolina, [Mr. Calhoun] who the other day, talked about the predictions of the minority, having failed, then pledged himself that the greater portion of the country, would be in our possession in six weeks after the war should be commenced. Some gentlemen even supposed that no efforts of ours were necessary; that the Canadians were panting for the glory of conquering themselves. Two campaigns are now wasted, and you are no nearer your object than when you began.

After this review of the measures of administration, which gentlemen have uniformly supported, and which have progressively brought us into our present calamitous situation, I should like to know upon what principle they can set up their high claims to our confidence. Has any one of their measures succeeded? Have they been able to perform any of the promises so lavishly made? They rejected the treaty of 1806 and pro-



mised you a better. They were mistaken. They resorted to the embargo, to coerce Great-Britain, and to save you from war. Great-Britain maintained her policy, and laughed at your embargo, and you are now at war. They adopted the non-intercourse with equal effect. The act of May 1810, was to relieve you from the injustice of both belligerents ; it has brought you into a ruinous war with one, without obtaining justice from the other. The war finally was to secure every thing. It has secured nothing—but combined with the restrictive system sacrificed every thing. The whole system of measures in fact, from the beginning, has been a miserable patchwork of expedients, resorted to as occasion seemed to require, without any regular and liberal policy. For myself, therefore, I cannot unite with gentlemen (however much I may respect them as individuals) in a course which has led us into many evils, and which in my opinion, if persisted in, must terminate in ruin.

I hope, I shall be indulged on this occasion, to use the liberty which gentlemen, on the other side so frequently exercise. Permit me also, in my turn to invite to union. An union, not to support measures, which every days experience condemns ; to continue a hopeless, disastrous and ruinous war ; to fasten on ourselves and posterity, a heavy load of burthens, to cherish the profligacy of those who riot on the public spoils. But an union to restore the general happiness. *Let them come over to us*, and with us travel the path that leads to peace, and national prosperity, from which they have departed. Their policy stands condemned by universal experience ; to ours it has given a high sanction. I repeat, therefore—unite with us, and restore peace to our country.